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CATCHING A HUSBAND;

OR,

Dying to Marry:

A COMEDY,

IN THREE ACTS,

By James H. Carter,

AUTHOR OF "LOVE'S MASQUERADE: OR, MONEY GIVES CONSENT."

WITH THE CAST OF CHARACTERS, STAGE BUSINESS, RELATIVE POSITIONS, ETC.

CINCINNATI:

MARSHALL & HEFLEY, CORNER VINE & SECOND STS.

1859.

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

THE new comedy of "CATCHING A HUSBAND; OR, DYING TO MARRY," by Jas. H. Carter, Esq., of this city, was produced for the first time on Monday night, the evening of MRS. KENT'S benefit. It was well received and made a most decided hit. The incidents and points of the piece, as they were exhibited during the performance, drew forth rounds of applause. In a word, the comedy was entirely successful and established itself at once as being fully entitled to a place on the stage.—*Cincinnati Daily Times.*

CATCHING A HUSBAND.—Owing to other engagements, it was not in our power to attend the National to witness the performance of our friend J. H. Carter's new comedy; but, feeling a lively interest in the success of this domestic production, arising from the pleasure we had had in reading its many pleasing and amusing incidents, we could not refrain from ascertaining its success from those fully competent to judge, and we were much gratified to hear of its complete and decided triumph. In our humble opinion, we rank this new comedy among those that will live on the stage, and bear repetition from time to time, as one of the popular and meritorious plays of the day.—*Cin. Daily Enquirer.*

THE NEW COMEDY.—We were told by a friend, well qualified to pass judgment on theatrical matters, that J. H. Carter's play, "Catching a Husband; or, Dying to Marry," went off with great success on the evening of its performance at the "National." The performers acquitted themselves handsomely, and the comedy was well played throughout. The plot as it unraveled itself, produced bursts of applause from the delighted audience, and as the curtain fell at the winding up of the scene, there was a general shout of approval. We are glad to hear that the author has made such a decided hit, and we hope to see his play re-produced at the "National," for it has certainly proved itself worthy of being ranked among the standard comedies of the day. We must add, that we feel no slight pleasure in speaking thus, as it is not often that dramatic talent succeeds so admirably as has the effort of our friend the author of the New Comedy.—*Cin. Daily Gazette.*

TMP92-008806

CAST OF THE CHARACTERS,

As performed at the National Theater, June 11th, 1849.

Captain Linwood, of the English army,	Mr. Grosvenor.
Mr. Frippery, in cog.,	Mr. Thompson.
Ben Short, Capt. Linwood's Footman,	Mr. Spear.
Mr. Gordon, a Clergyman,	Mr. Gourley.
Waiter,	Mr. Myers.
Lady Merlin, a gay widow,	Mrs. Thompson.
Lucy Summers, Lady Merlin's Maid,	Mrs. Kent.

LOCALITY—ENGLAND.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

Entrances and Exits.—R. H. means right hand; R. H. 1 E., right hand first entrance; L. H., left hand; L. H. 1 E., left hand first entrance; 2 E., second entrance; U. E., upper entrance.

Relative Positions.—R. means right; L., left; C., center; R. C., right of cent.

*** The Publication.—This play has been published by subscription, by the friends of the author, as a matter of compliment to him, and as a source of amusement and gratification to them.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1859,
By JAMES H. CARTER,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of Ohio.

REMARKS BY THE AUTHOR.

This comedy was first introduced to the public, on the stage of the National Theater of Cincinnati, on the occasion of Mrs. E. Kent's benefit, June 11th, 1849, and was received with great favor and pronounced a decided success. It was again placed upon the stage of the National Theater, by the manager, on the night of June 7th, 1850, when it was received with renewed favor and success, and was performed for several consecutive nights. The part of Lucy Summers was personated by Mrs. Kent, on all of these occasions, and was performed by her in that unequaled style of acting for which she was so justly celebrated. This lady was a great favorite, as an actress, with the author, and he wrote the part of Lucy Summers especially for her. He trusts, therefore, that the reader will pardon the introduction here of the following simple monody, written by him on the occasion of Mrs. Kent's death in July, 1850:

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. ELIZABETH KENT.

She has made her last exit,
Our own player queen;
Death's dark gloomy curtain
Now drops o'er the scene.
Yes, the last act is finished!
Life's drama is o'er;
Her gay voice of pleasure
Will be heard here no more.
But, bright in our memory,
A star will e'er shine,
Whose light will remind us
Of one, now divine.
Tho' the tear drop of sorrow
May quietly flow
O'er our cheeks, as we dwell
On this scene of woe,
We must think of that Heaven,
Where her spirit finds rest,
Where the scenes never change—
The abode of the blest.
Yes, the last act is finished!
Life's drama is o'er!
The curtain has fallen
To rise never more!

Cincinnati, February, 1859. J. H. C.

CATCHING A HUSBAND;

OR,

DYING TO MARRY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in* LADY MERLIN'S *house.*

Enter LADY MERLIN *and her Maid*, LUCY. R. H.

LADY M. Lucy, I do not know what to make of Captain Linwood! He appears to have a feeling of love for me sometimes; and then, again, he seems only polite and courteous in his attentions—the same as other gentlemen.

LUCY. I can 't tell, ma'm, what he means; but I think he does love you, ma'm.

LADY M. What makes you think so, Lucy?

LUCY. Why, ma'm, I have watched him when he has been here, and have guessed, from his actions, that he must love you. I can see these things better than you can, ma'm, because I am only a spectator.

LADY M. Well, Lucy, it gives me pleasure to hear you speak thus, for I know you are a very knowing and sagacious girl.

LUCY. Yes, ma'm—for others, but not for myself, ma'm.

LADY M. What mean you, Lucy?

LUCY (*abashed*). Why, you must know, ma'm, that—— that Captain Linwood has a Mr. Benjamin Short in his employ—his footman—who has—who has—

LADY M. Well, what has he done?

LUCY. Why he has, ma'm—stolen—

LADY M. What! is he a thief? I 'll inform the Captain, immediately, and have him arrested.

LUCY. No, ma'm. He has rob—

Lady M. Well, Lucy, do speak out! What has he been guilty of doing?

Lucy. Then, ma'm, he has—has stolen—my heart.

Lady M. O, that is the matter, is it?

Lucy. Yes, ma'm. And he keeps me in the same cruel suspense that Captain Linwood does you, ma'm. But excuse me, ma'm, for being so very familiar. (*curtesying.*)

Lady M. I do, Lucy, for you are my confidential maid; and this is the reason why I have spoken to you thus freely of Captain Linwood and myself. I have many female friends, as you well know, Lucy. But I can not confide to any one of them a secret of so dear a nature. All women have tongues, you know; and the most discreet will, at times, forget themselves, when love is the theme.

Lucy. Yes, ma'm.

Lady M. I can trust you though, Lucy.

Lucy. Yes, ma'm. You have been such a kind and good mistress to me, that I will ever love and honor you; and you may be sure I never could be any thing but faithful to you, ma'm.

Lady M. Well, Lucy, I may want you to assist me a little in my design. I am now about—no, I won't say how old I am. But I am not too old to marry again, and marry I will, and that, too, Captain Linwood. I have been a widow, now, nearly six years, and ever since I resumed my position in the gay and fashionable world, I have had many admirers; but none ever had the power of making my heart feel the least emotion of love, till the fascinating Captain came. You know, Lucy, that I am my own mistress; and I have now resolved to marry the Captain—and that, too, soon. I always had a preference for a military gentleman; for my brother, whom I dearly love, and whom I have not seen for more than two years, is a lieutenant in the army.

Lucy. I will give you all the help I can—you may be sure of that, ma'm.

Lady M. I want to discover or invent some plan, Lucy, that will oblige the Captain to make me an immediate proposal. He has been paying me marked attention for a good while, and driven away all my other admirers, except that Mr. Frippery. But *he* has not sense enough, however, to see that his room is preferable to his company.

LUCY. That 's very true, ma'm. Some men have very little sense in some things. Now, there 's Mr. Benjamin Short: he can not see how much better it would be for him to marry a decent woman like me and make himself respectable for life.

LADY M. Well, Lucy, I will permit you to win the Captain's footman in your own way; and I hope your wits will make you successful. But, in the mean time, I shall require your assistance to further my designs. Come to me in my chamber in a short time.

[*Exit Lady Merlin.* R. H. 1 E.

LUCY. I do love my mistress, that 's a fact—and I must do all I can to help her to become Mrs. Linwood. She loves the Captain, and I know the Captain loves her; and I think that our two heads will be more than a match for him. Then, I have to manage Mr. Benjamin Short. He is a very insinuating young man, just like his master, the Captain. I have made up my mind to become *Mrs. Short* before *long*, and nothing *shorter*. [*Sings:*]

Air—"I SHOULD LIKE TO MARRY."

O, I intend to marry
My little Benny Short;
I can no longer tarry
A maiden of this sort.
He 's such a handsome fellow,
And has such winning ways,
He 's made my heart so mellow,
'T will melt some of these days.
O, I intend to marry
My own dear Benny Short,
I can no longer tarry
A maiden of this sort.

My mistress has consented,
I 'll win him as I please—
I 'll never be contented
Till I see him on his knees.
But when we are united
I 'll be a loving wife;
His wants shall ne'er be slighted—
I 'll stick to him through life.
O, I intend to marry
My own dear Benny Short,
I can no longer tarry
A maiden of this sort.

[*Exit Lucy.* R. H. 1 E.

SCENE II.—CAPTAIN LINWOOD'S *room at the Hotel. The Captain is discovered with his coat off, reading a newspaper, and sitting by a table on which are pen, ink and paper.* BEN SHORT, *his footman, is engaged in brushing the Captain's coat.*

CAPTAIN. I can not see any thing in the paper, this morning, that 's new; there is nothing whatever of an interesting character—not even the chronicle of a late marriage or death. Well, the papers are like every thing else, dull at times. I feel pretty dull myself, this morning. (*Looking over the paper.*)

BEN (*aside*). The Captain thought himself sharp enough last night, with the better part of three bottles of champagne in him.

CAPTAIN. What do you say, Ben?

BEN. I say, sir, it takes very sharp brushing to clean your coat, this morning. But I have it cleaned now. Will you put it on, sir?

CAPTAIN. Yes; hand it to me, and help me on with it. It is time that I should call on Lady Merlin. (*Ben hands the Captain his coat, and assists him in putting it on.*)

BEN. There, sir, it looks as well as ever, sir.

CAPTAIN. Ben, I have a little headache, this morning. I believe I drank rather too much champagne at the card party last night.

BEN. I do n't think you took much, sir—(*aside*) nearly three bottles!

CAPTAIN. Well, whether I drank much or little, I think I am indebted to it for this headache, and I shall not drink, from this day, any more such headache stuff.

BEN. That 's a very good resolution, sir. (*Aside*) I am devilish sorry, though, for I 'll not get any more.

CAPTAIN. Ben, have you seen Lucy, Lady Merlin's maid, lately?

BEN. No, sir; not since I went there with you, sir.

CAPTAIN. I very much suspect that you are in love with that girl, Ben.

BEN. No, sir—that is to say, sir, that I—

CAPTAIN. That you are in love with her?

BEN (*stammering*). Yes, sir—no, sir—but, sir, I was going to—

CAPTAIN. Yes, you were going to confess the fact. Your manner has confessed it, already.

BEN. Well, sir—you know it all, then, sir.

CAPTAIN. Are you going to marry her?

BEN. As to that, I can't say now, sir. But I don't know how soon I might be disposed to pop the question, sir.

CAPTAIN. Ben, have you forgotten the agreement you made with me when I first took you into my service?

BEN (*hesitating*). I don't know, sir, whether I have or not.

CAPTAIN. Come, come, that's too equivocal. Don't you recollect that you agreed to stay with me three years, for forty pounds a year—and if you left me before the end of the time you were to forfeit all your wages?

BEN. Yes, sir—I believe I do now, sir. But I did not know Lucy Summers then, sir.

CAPTAIN. That's nothing to do with the matter. You have only served me about two years, and I shall hold you to the agreement.

BEN. It's rather hard to lose one's wages, sir. I can't very well spare any of mine; and, as you have been such a good master to me, I believe I will serve the whole time out, sir.

CAPTAIN. That's well spoken, Ben. Now I will add five pounds more to the wages that are due you, and give you liberty to make love to Lucy as much as you please. She will wait for you, never fear, if you only follow the right plan. Women do not so easily give up the men their hearts tell them they love.

BEN. I am much obliged to you, sir (*bowing*), for your kindness. I think I can work all things right with Lucy; and the year will soon pass round, sir.

CAPTAIN. Ben, for fear Lucy's bright eyes should convert you from your obligations to me, I will write down the terms of the agreement, and take your name to it. (*The Captain sits down at the table and writes.*)

BEN (*aside*). My master, the Captain, seems very much afraid that I will desert. I believe I would have popped the question to Lucy in a short time, for I do love her like fun—she has *such* attractions! But I must, and will, manage her for a year longer, and keep away matrimony; for I can't afford to lose my wages, and have nothing left to make the pot boil.

CAPTAIN. Here, Ben, come sign your name to this. (*Ceasing to write.*)

BEN (*going up to the Captain*). Will you please read what I am to sign, sir?

CAPTAIN. Certainly (*reads*). I hereby agree to continue in the service of Capt. Henry Linwood for one year longer, from this day, at the rate of forty-five pounds a year; or forfeit all wages that may be due me.

BEN. That 's all right, I believe, sir.

CAPTAIN. Now sign your name to it.

BEN. I can 't, sir; I must make my mark. They did n't teach writing in the school I went to, sir.

CAPTAIN. Your name is Benjamin Short. (*The Captain writes.*)

BEN. Yes, sir; that 's the honest name my poor mother gave me—and all she left me to get through the world with.

CAPTAIN. You are much better off than some men, Ben; for there are many who are left without even an honest name to make their way through the world with. But now make your mark, here (*pointing to the place*).

BEN (*making his mark with the pen*). There it is, sir.

CAPTAIN (*putting the agreement in his pocket*). Ben, as we understand each other, now, I will go and make my morning call on Lady Merlin. She is a charming creature, and I love her more than any other woman. But I do n't intend to marry for a year yet; and if I can but retain Lady Merlin's love—for I think she does love me—till the year rolls round, and I find that my love for her is still the same, I will offer her my hand and heart: but not till the end of the year. I made a bet of one hundred pounds with Mr. Frippery, last night, at the card party, that I would not be a married man for one year from this time; and I intend to win that bet, and present the money to the lady who may become the bride of Capt. Linwood. Come, I will call on Lady Merlin, and drive away, in her sweet smiles, the remainder of my headache. (*Going.* R. H.)

BEN (*aside*). Hang that bet! I am in for it, and must grin and bear it. O, Lucy Summers!

CAPTAIN (*stopping*). What 's that you say, Ben?

BEN. I say, sir, I 've lost a shilling, *somewhere.* (*Pretends to be looking for it.*)

CAPTAIN. Hunt for it when we return—never mind it now.

BEN. Very well, sir. (*Ben gives a knowing look as he goes.*) [*Exeunt Captain and Ben.* L. H. 1 E.

SCENE III.—*A parlor in* LADY MERLIN'S *house.*

Enter LADY MERLIN, *followed by* LUCY. R. H. 1 E.

LADY M. Lucy, I wonder if Capt. Linwood will call this morning?

LUCY. I think he will, ma'm. He always comes on this day.

LADY M. Yes, this is the day he generally pays me a visit.

LUCY. I hope he may come, for your sake, ma'm.

LADY M. That 's one word for me, Lucy, and two for yourself. He is most generally attended by his footman, a certain Benjamin Short.

LUCY. Yes, mam.

LADY M. Lucy, if the Captain does not give me more encouragement this morning, in the way of a proposal, I will try the plan I made known to you, and see how that will affect his feelings. I intend to give him every opportunity to make me a declaration.

LUCY. I hope you may bring the Captain to his proper senses, ma'm; and I think you will, if you try. (*A knocking at the door is heard.* L. H. 1 E.)

LADY M. Ah, there he comes. Show him in, Lucy.

LUCY. Yes, ma'm. (*Lucy goes to the door, and Mr. Frippery* enters.* L. H. 1 E.)

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*MR. FRIPPERY is the mysterious character in the Comedy: and the great *feature* in this part, that should be strictly observed by the person playing it, *is the disguise.* Mr. Frippery should be a well-dressed gentleman, approaching almost to an exquisite, and should wear a wig of an entirely different colored hair from his own, so that, when he appears as Lieut. Clifford, the contrast will be the more striking. *In Act III and Scene 3d,* he should have his dresses exceedingly well arranged; so that, when he appears as the Doctor, he should not look at all like Mr. Frippery till he changes to Mr. F. again. He should then be well arranged and prepared to appear as Lieut. Clifford, of the British army. It is not intended that the audience, or the characters in the piece should know that *Mr. Frippery is Lieut. Clifford,* till he reveals himself. This is the great reason why the disguise should be well observed and attended to, so that the character may have its proper effect in the Comedy.—THE AUTHOR.

Lady M (*aside*). Pshaw! 'T is that Mr. Frippery.

Mr. Frippery. Ah—good morning, my dear Lady Merlin. It gives me great pleasure to see you look so charming to-day.

Lady M. You flatter me, Mr. Frippery.

Mr. F. No—'pon my word, my dear Lady Merlin—not at all. I never saw you look so interesting, if I might except the first evening I had the pleasure of seeing you; and that was at Lady Gay's soiree, last month.

Lady M. That was a very gay party, Mr. Frippery.

Mr. F. It was, indeed, my dear Lady Merlin; and none gave more brilliancy to the gay assemblage than yourself, notwithstanding there were so many beautiful women there.

Lady M. You gentlemen will flatter, Mr. Frippery.

Mr. F. O, no, my dear Lady Merlin—I never do. I always speak what my heart tells me is true. But will you permit me to say, my dear Lady Merlin, that I called this morning to do myself the honor of soliciting the pleasure of your company to the Opera, to-morrow night?

Lady M. I do not think that I can go to-morrow evening, Mr. Frippery. I have an engagement which will prevent me from accepting your very polite invitation.

Mr. F. I very much regret to hear that I can not have the pleasure of your company, my dear Lady Merlin. (*A knocking at the door is heard.* L. H.)

Lady M. Lucy, attend the door. (*Lucy goes to the door, and shows in Capt. Linwood and his Footman, Ben Short. Ben shakes hands with Lucy; and he and Lucy walk to the rear, where they appear to be conversing and interestingly engaged with each other.*)

Captain L. Good morning, Lady Merlin. I hope you are quite well to-day, madam.

Lady M. Thank you, I am, Capt. Linwood. But you do not look quite so well as usual.

Captain L. I have a slight touch of headache, madam—that is all. (*Seeing Mr. Frippery.*) Ah, how do you do, Mr. Frippery?

Mr. F. Very well, I thank you, Captain. [*The Captain and Lady Merlin appear to be conversing.*] (*Aside.*) Now is my opportunity for pushing the Captain onward. I must win that bet we made last night. I will try his

jealous disposition a little. (*Turning to the Captain.*) I say, Captain, you recollect the bet we made?

CAPTAIN L. O, yes, perfectly well; and I think that a gentleman of just about your size is going to lose some money.

MR. F. Time, Captain, will show who will be the loser.

LADY M. Gentlemen, you can not both win. (*Aside.*) I must think about winning. I will try the Captain's jealousy, if he has any. (*Turning to Mr. Frippery.*) Mr. Frippery, will you not walk with me to the garden, and see some very beautiful flowers that receive my care and attention? (*Mr. Frippery bows, steps up and takes Lady Merlin's arm in his.*) Captain, will you not bear us company? (*Lady M. and Mr. F. going.* L. H.)

CAPTAIN L. Most certainly, madam, with pleasure. (*Aside.*) Confound that Frippery! I must have an eye on him.

LADY M. Come, Captain.

CAPTAIN L. I am at your service, madam.

[*Exeunt Lady Merlin and Mr. Frippery; Capt. Linwood follows them out.* L. H. 1 E.

BEN *and* LUCY *come forward.*

LUCY. Mr. Short, then you are a little afraid of robbers?

BEN. Yes, Miss Lucy, I am a little afraid, ever since that rascally thief was found hid under the Captain's bed.

LUCY (*aside*). I will turn his fear to my benefit in some way or other. (*To him.*) You never expect to find any robbers under your bed, do you?

BEN. Well, I do n't know. But I do know that I keep my pistols always loaded and ready for use, in case I should find any.

LUCY. Why, Mr. Short, you would n't shoot any one, would you?

BEN. Yes, I would, just as soon as I would (*runs up to Lucy and kisses her*) kiss you.

LUCY. O, Mr. Short, how you do take a body by surprise!

BEN. Do n't you know that, when you get any thing good, without expecting it, it tastes a great deal sweeter?

Lucy. Yes; but then a body sometimes likes to know what 's coming, for fear it might not be so sweet to their taste.

Ben. You do n't mean to say that *that* kiss was not sweet! I can taste the honey yet (*smacking his lips*).

Lucy. I shall not tell you what I mean. But you dare not do that again.

Ben. I dare not?

Lucy. No; you dare not do so again. (*Aside.*) I hope he 'll not take a dare.

Ben. I never take a dare from any woman, without paying her lips well for it. (*Runs up to Lucy and kisses her two or three times.*)

Lucy. Why, Mr. Short, you are the most daring fellow I ever saw.

Ben. I am not afraid of a pretty pair of lips, I can tell you. But, Lucy, as we are by ourselves, I have something very particular to ask you.

Lucy (*aside*). Now he is going to ask me to have him. (*Turning to Ben.*) Have you, Mr. Short?

Ben. You know, Miss Lucy, I have been here to see you often.

Lucy (*aside*). I thought the kisses would be the thing. (*Turning to Ben.*) Yes, Mr. Short, you have called here several times.

Ben. Well, Miss Lucy, I have never had so good a time as this to ask you.

Lucy (*aside*). O, dear! how all-overish I do feel. (*Turning to him.*) What were you going to say, Mr. Short?

Ben. I say—Miss Lucy—I never had so good a time as this—

Lucy (*aside*). Why do n't he say it. (*Turning to Ben.*) I hear you, Mr. Short.

Ben. To ask you if you ever thought of changing your condition?

Lucy (*aside*). What a slow way of popping the question. (*To Ben.*) I do n't know what I might do, Mr. Short, if I was asked.

Ben. Would you give this hand (*taking hold of Lucy's hand*) to the first one who asked you?

Lucy. That depends on who the first one might be, Mr. Short.

BEN. Well, Miss Lucy, I can 't be the first one (*letting go of Lucy's hand*), for I am under contract to keep single for one year from this time.

LUCY (*aside*). I am *so* disappointed, I do n't know what to say.

BEN. Yes, Miss Lucy, I am bound to Capt. Linwood for one year—and I must serve out the time.

Enter CAPTAIN LINWOOD, *discontented and somewhat irritated.* L. H. 1 E.

CAPTAIN L. Come, Ben, I am going. I have remained here long enough. I see that Lady Merlin is very particularly engaged with Mr. Frippery this morning, and has no time to bestow on me—not even to address me a word. Confound him, I say! Lucy, does he come here often?

LUCY. Yes, sir, he comes quite often. (*Aside.*) That 's a whopper!

CAPTAIN L (*aside*). I must see about this. She surely can 't love Mr. Frippery. (*To Lucy.*) Tell your mistress that I will call on her to-morrow morning.

[*Exit Captain.* L. H. 1 E.

BEN. The Captain seems to be a good deal out of sorts. I must follow him (*going*). One year, Lucy.

[*Exit Ben.* L. H. 1 E.

LUCY (*imitating him*). One year, Lucy. I suppose he means to ask me at the end of the year. I never was so greatly disappointed in all my life. I thought that I was going to become Mrs. Short without any further trouble. But I will not wait as *long* as Mr. Short insinuates. I have a plan in my head which, I think, *will* make a *short* business of it for me; and I will soon try it, too, with Lady Merlin's permission.

Enter LADY MERLIN *and* MR. FRIPPERY. L. H.

MR. F. Your flowers are almost as beautiful as the fair being who bestows so much care and attention in their culture, my dear Lady Merlin.

LADY M. Say not so, Mr. Frippery. Your compliments are really as plentiful as the rain drops of an April shower.

MR. F. It would delight me to hear you say that they were as refreshing. But purity and loveliness require no

such invigorating aid. I must again express my feelings of deep regret, my dear Lady Merlin, that I can not have the honor of your company to the Opera. As I have an engagement at twelve, to-day, I shall be obliged to bid you adieu, and hope that I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing you. (*Mr. Frippery bows and exits.* L. H. 1 E.)

LADY M (*courtesies*). Adieu, Mr. Frippery. Lucy, I think that I tried the Captain a little this morning. He certainly gave strong symptoms of jealous feelings.

LUCY. You may well say so, ma'm—for he went off in a great huffy. He must love you, ma'm, or else he would not have acted as he did.

LADY M. Yes, I think he does. I am glad that I made such a good use of Mr. Frippery this morning. I shall test the Captain's feelings for me, in the way I have already made known to you, the next time he calls.

LUCY. Well, ma'm, you 'll have a chance of doing so to-morrow morning—for he told me to tell you that he was coming.

LADY M. I am rejoiced to hear it. We must be well prepared for him, Lucy. [*Exit Lady Merlin.* L. H.

LUCY. And I must be well prepared for Mr. Benjamin Short. [*Lucy sings.*]

Air—"FANNY GRAY."

These men are all a cruel set,
As we poor women know;
We never can a moment get
Of peace, where'er we go.
They 're always sporting, teazing, courting,
To make us think they love—
They 're always suing, wooing, cooing,
As plaintive as the dove.
They 're always suing, wooing, cooing,
As plaintive as the dove.

And when our hearts they once have won,
They then no longer tease,
They think no more of what they 've done,
But treat us as they please;
Whilst we are sighing, crying, dying,
At our afflicted lot.
Alas! our fate we mourn too late—
We soon will be forgot!
Alas! our fate we mourn too late—
We soon will be forgot!
(To be sung in a crying style.)

[*Exit Lucy.* R. H. 1 E.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street.*

Enter MR. FRIPPERY. L. H. 1 E.

MR. F. I am as yet unknown, and will remain incog. for a while longer. I must win the one hundred pounds from Captain Linwood, for I intend to make a particular use of it. I have seen enough to tell me clearly that he loves Lady Merlin, and any one can see how much she loves the Captain. I will do all in my power to assist her in winning him, without her being aware of it, and at the same time I will be preparing the way to win the one hundred pounds. Ah! here comes the Captain himself.

Enter CAPTAIN LINWOOD, *followed by* BEN. L. H. 1 E.

CAPTAIN L. Why, Mr. Frippery! are you just on your way from Lady Merlin's?

MR. F. Yes, Captain. I found the gay widow so very enchanting this morning that I permitted myself to become a willing captive to her charms, and time flew on pleasure's wings, I assure you.

CAPTAIN L (*aside*). The devil it did. (*To Mr. F.*) Perhaps you would like to double that bet, Mr. Frippery, and make it two hundred pounds.

MR. F. I have not the least objection, Captain. If you say so, we will make it two hundred pounds.

CAPTAIN L. Well, sir, then we will make it so. Ben, do you hear our understanding about this matter?

BEN. Yes, sir, I do, and I will recollect it too, sir. (*Aside.*) The Captain's in a bad humor. I hope he may lose his money.

MR. F. Will you not accompany me to my hotel, Captain, and dine with me to-day?

CAPTAIN L. No, I thank you; I have some business requiring my attention in a different quarter. I am much obliged to you for your invitation. Good day. (*Mr. Frippery bows.*) [*Exit Captain Linwood.* L. H. 1 E.

BEN (*aside and going*). The Captain's considerably out of sorts about something. I think that Lady Merlin must be the cause of it. [*Exit Ben.* R. H. 1 E.

Mr. F. The Captain is evidently a good deal worried. This is greatly in favor of Lady Merlin, and consequently much in favor of my winning the two hundred pounds. I am very glad that he doubled the bet; so much the *better.* I will win it, and then I will make——no, I will not say what I will do, till the proper time arrives.

[*Exit Mr. Frippery.* R. H. 1 E.

Scene II.—*A room in* Lady Merlin's *house.* Lady Merlin *is discovered sitting at a table, dressed as a middle-aged lady, with cap and spectacles on, and engaged in sewing.* Lucy *is busy dusting the furniture of the room and disguised as the aged waiting maid or servant of Lady Merlin's aunt.*

Lady M. Lucy, we must perform our parts well this morning.

Lucy. Yes ma'm. I think we can do so.

Lady M. You know, Lucy, that I am Lady Merlin's aunt, and that you are the maid of Lady Merlin's aunt.

Lucy. Yes, ma'm. I think I can perform my part very well, as I won't have much to say.

Lady M. Recollect also, Lucy, that Lady Merlin unexpectedly departed somewhere last evening, without letting any one know where she was going, or how long she intended to be away.

Lucy. Yes, ma'm—and her maid Lucy went off with her in the same mysterious way, ma'm. (*A knocking at the door is heard.* L. H. 1 E.)

Lady M. Now, recollect yourself, Lucy.

Lucy. I will, ma'm. (*Lucy goes to the door and Capt. Linwood, followed by Ben, enters.* L. H. 1 E.)

Captain L. Why, Ben, we have got into the wrong house, or some change has taken place here.

Ben. There are two strange people here, sure sir.

Captain L. (*To Lady Merlin*). Is not this Lady Merlin's drawing room, madam?

Lady M (*disguising her voice in some degree*). It is, sir.

Captain L. Is she not at home, madam?

Lady M. No, sir. She very suddenly left here yesterday evening and sent for me, her aunt, to come and take care of her house till she returned.

CAPTAIN L. Indeed!

LADY M. Yes, sir. But she did not say where she was going, or when she would return.

CAPTAIN L. Is it possible?

LADY M. It is true, sir. And what is still more strange, she did not intimate with whom she was going; but I have too much confidence in her prudence to suspect for a moment that she would run away with any one.

CAPTAIN L. It is very strange indeed.

LADY M. Her maid, Lucy, is also missing. (*To Lucy.*) Is she not, Jane?

LUCY. Yes, ma'm, she is, and I do not know what to think of it.

BEN (*aside*). Here 's a nice kettle of fish for the Captain and me.

CAPTAIN L (*aside*). Can it be possible that Lady Merlin has run away with Mr. Frippery?

LADY M (*aside to Lucy*). It takes well, Lucy.

LUCY. It does, ma'm. (*Lady M. and Lucy seem to be enjoying their success.*)

BEN. I say, Captain, if you will please allow me to say a word, sir. Suppose we go and try to find out which way they went, sir.

CAPTAIN L. Stop a moment, Ben; I will make some further inquiries of her aunt.

BEN. Do, sir.

CAPTAIN L. (*To Lady Merlin.*) Did she not leave a message for any one, madam?

LADY M. No, sir. When I arrived here she was gone, and I took immediate possession of her house and affairs.

CAPTAIN L. You are her aunt, then, madam, you say.

LADY M. Yes, sir, I have that honor.

CAPTAIN L. I must say, madam, that I see a very strong likeness in you to Lady Merlin. You look enough like her to be her twin sister, and, were it not for your looking so much older, I should certainly say you were. May I ask the pleasure of your name, madam.

LADY M (*confused*). Certainly, sir—my name is—

CAPTAIN L. What name did you say, madam?

LADY M (*much confused*). My name is, sir—

LUCY. Mrs. Surgess, shall I dust the next room, ma'm?

LADY M (*to the Captain*). Mrs. Surgess, at your service, sir. (*To Lucy.*) Jane, you need not do so just now.

CAPTAIN L (*aside and to Ben*). (*Lady Merlin and Lucy try to hear what is said, and look at each other slyly.*) Ben, there is something more here than we can understand. Did you observe the aunt's confusion? She knows a great deal more than she is willing to tell.

BEN. I think so, too, sir. I saw them making signs to each other, sir.

CAPTAIN L. Perhaps she has run off with Mr. Frippery.

BEN. It looks mighty like it, sir. (*Aside.*) I hope Lucy has n't run off with any fellow.

CAPTAIN L. If Mr. Frippery has dared to run off with her, I will shoot him the first time I see him. (*Lady M. and Lucy laugh to themselves at their success. A knocking is heard at the door.* L. H. 1 E.)

LADY M (*to Lucy*). Jane, go to the door and see who that is. (*Lucy goes to the door and Mr. Frippery enters.* L. H. 1 E.)

CAPTAIN L. Why, Mr. Frippery, I am glad to see you. Your presence has relieved all my suspicions.

MR. F. What mean you, Captain?

CAPTAIN L. O it was nothing of any consequence, I assure you. You must pardon me for having indulged in any such foolish fancies.

MR. F. Well, Captain, trusting to your honor as a gentleman, that you have done nothing to wrong me in any way, I will not ask you for any further explanation. (*Mr. F. sees Lady Merlin but does not recognize her.*) I ask your pardon, madam (*bows*). Is not Lady Merlin at home?

LADY M. She is not, sir.

MR. F (*recognizes Lady Merlin—aside*). I see all through this disguise, if I am not mistaken. (*Turning to Lady Merlin.*) I very much regret, my dear madam, that Lady Merlin is not at home, as I had been anticipating much pleasure in seeing her this morning. You will please do me the favor of stating to Lady Merlin, when she returns, that Mr. Frippery called. (*Aside.*) I will go and not interfere with Lady Merlin's scheme. (*Turning to Lady M.*) Good morning, my dear madam (*going*).

CAPTAIN L. Stop, Mr. Frippery, I feel very much in-

clined, just now, to increase that bet another hundred, if you are agreed.

MR. F. Agreed, Captain, with all my heart. Three hundred pounds, then, it is.

CAPTAIN L. Ben, take notice of this. Our bet is now three hundred pounds.

BEN. Yes, sir, I have. (*Aside.*) The Captain is getting *better* fast.

MR. F. Good day, Captain. Success to all well planned shemes, say I.

[*Exit Mr. Frippery.* L. H. 1 E.

CAPTAIN L. Ben, why are we not going?

BEN. I do n't know, sir. I 've been wanting to go for some time, sir. We might soon find out the way they went, sir. (*Lady M. and Lucy appear to be rejoicing at their success.*)

CAPTAIN L. I shall not leave till I satisfy myself more about this mysterious position of matters (*walks up to Lady Merlin and recognizes a ring on her finger*). Ah! that 's the ring I presented to Lady Merlin. Permit me, madam, to look at those spectacles. (*The Captain takes off her spectacles and recognizes Lady Merlin.*) Ah! is it you, Lady Merlin? (*Lady Merlin screams and rushes out. Lucy also screams and Ben runs to her, catches her in his arms and kisses her; the Captain laughs heartily at the change of events; Lucy tears herself away from Ben and rushes out, and Ben joins the Captain and they both laugh most heartily.*)

CAPTAIN L (*laughing*). Ben, we came very near being caught in that trap.

BEN. We did indeed, sir. The instant you went up to Lady Merlin, sir, I recognized Lucy at once, by one of her own expressions. (*Ben laughs.*)

CAPTAIN L. Ben, that 's what I call a decided failure.

BEN. They could n't come it over us that time, sir. (*Lucy steals in unseen by them and hears what they say.*)

CAPTAIN L. The widow is a very charming woman. I love her now more than ever; but I can 't marry for a year. Lady Merlin must invent some better plan than that, to alarm me. I am not caught quite so easily.

[*Exit Captain Linwood.* L. H. 1 E.

BEN (*going*). What dev'lish sweet lips that Lucy Summers has. I can taste the sugar yet as plain—

[*Smacking his lips and exit Ben.* L. H. 1 E.

LUCY. Yes, we will try a better plan to alarm you, Captain Linwood, and succeed, too, the next time. How bold Ben behaved. He took advantage of my situation. But his kisses were such good wholesome ones, that I suppose I will have to forgive him. I will let my mistress know every thing I heard the Captain say, and he will find himself caught in a trap which he does not dream of. That Ben shall be mine by this time to-morrow, or else there 's nothing in woman's invention. [*Exit Lucy.* R. H. 1 E.

SCENE III.—Mr. FRIPPERY'S *room at the Hotel.* Mr. FRIPPERY *is discovered reading a letter. In the room are a table, chairs, &c.*

MR. F. This is the last letter that I received from her before I left Paris. I love to read it. It is filled with so much kindness and affection. How happy she will be to meet me again. (*A knocking at the door is heard. Mr. Frippery puts the letter in his pocket and goes to the door. Captain Linwood, followed by Ben, walks in.*) Walk in, Captain, I am very happy to see you. (*Mr. F. and the Captain shake hands.*)

CAPTAIN L. You seem to be very well arranged here, Mr. Frippery.

MR. F. Yes, tolerably, so, But be seated, Captain. (*Hands the Captain a chair and takes one himself. Ben, with hat in hand, walks about the room amusing himself by noticing the arrangement of things.*)

CAPTAIN L. You made but a short stay at Lady Merlin's house this morning.

MR. F. Yes, I did. After I found that she was not at home, I had no particular motive for remaining, and having another engagement pending, I hastened away. I suppose you remained till she returned, Captain.

CAPTAIN L (*aside*). I shall not let him know what occurred. (*To Mr. Frippery*). Yes, not having any thing very particular to do, I remained till she returned. She came back in a short time after you left.

MR. F. I suppose you spent a very interesting morning with the charming widow.

CAPTAIN L. Yes, it was an interesting morning, I assure you. Was it not, Ben?

BEN. Yes sir; very interesting, sir, very.

MR. F (*aside*). I hope that Lady Merlin's plot proved successful. (*To the Captain.*) Captain, will you not do me the honor of taking a glass of good Madeira?

CAPTAIN L. Yes, Mr. Frippery, I will with pleasure.

BEN (*aside*). So will I with the greatest kind of pleasure.

MR. F. (*rings the bell for the waiter and the waiter enters.* R. H. 1 E.) Waiter! bring me a couple of bottles of your best Madeira.

WAITER. Yes, sir. [*Waiter exits.* R. H. 1 E.

CAPTAIN L. The waiters appear very attentive here.

MR. F. Yes, sir; this establishment is well conducted, and the servants are very orderly.

Enter WAITER *with two bottles of wine and glasses and sets them on the table.*

WAITER. Any thing else, sir?

MR. F. No, not now. (*Waiter bows and exits.*) Come, Captain, let us try a glass of this wine. (*Mr. F. and the Captain go to the table. Mr. F. fills two glasses, hands one to the Captain and takes one himself.*) Here's to the charming Lady Merlin—may success ever attend her.

CAPTAIN L. Good, very good. (*The Captain and Mr. F. drink.*) Now, Mr. Frippery, permit me to propose a toast.

MR. F. Most certainly, Captain. (*Mr. F. fills up the glasses again and they both take them up.*)

CAPTAIN L. Here's to the one who wins the three hundred pounds—may he always have as good luck.

MR. F. Capital, most capital! (*They both drink and set their empty glasses on the table.*)

BEN (*aside, while they are drinking*). That *will* be a *capital*, to the one who wins.

MR. F. Come, Captain, be seated. You are not in a hurry, I hope. (*The Captain and Mr. F. take their chairs again. Ben goes to the table, pours out a glass of wine and drinks it.*)

CAPTAIN L. O, no; I have no pressing engagement on

hand this afternoon. (*Ben is in the act of pouring out another glass of wine, when the glass slips from his hand and falls on the floor. Captain L., turning to Ben*): Ben, what are you about there?

Ben. Nothing, sir. I accidentally brushed off a glass with my coat tail; that 's all, sir.

Mr. F. Never mind it, Captain. It is nothing.

Captain L. Ben, you must be more careful.

Ben. I will, sir. (*Ben pours out two more glasses and drinks them, and then walks away from the table.*)

Mr. F. Captain, I think that Lady Merlin is one of the most fascinating women I have ever had the pleasure of knowing; and I have been acquainted with a good many in my time.

Captain L. She is, indeed, a most charming woman.

Mr. F. Do you know, Captain, that I enteriain a great deal of love for her.

Captain L. The devil you do. (*Ben listens to what they say.*)

Mr. F. Yes, Captain, it is true; and I begin to think very seriously of the propriety of changing my present position.

Captain L (*aside*). He shall not marry Lady Merlin, though. (*To Mr. F.*) You do not mean to say that you intend to propose to the charming widow?

Mr. F. I shall not exactly say what I am going to do, Captain; but I do confess that I entertain a great deal of love for Lady Merlin and that I intend soon to become a different kind of a man.

Ben (*aside*). I 'll drink to that. (*Ben goes to the table and drinks two more glasses of wine.*)

Captain L (*excited*). Mr. Frippery, I love the widow myself; and, dam me, if any other man marries her.

Ben (*aside*). Go it Cap. Them's the licks. (*Ben staggers a little, being slightly intoxicated.*)

Captain L. I hope, Mr. Frippery, that you are only jesting with me in this matter; for I should very much regret to call you my enemy.

Ben (*aside and staggering*). Give it to him, Cap.; I'm on your side.

Mr. F. Well, Captain, I do assure you that what I have spoken you will find true. But, come—you recol-

lect that "none but the brave deserve the fair." You may be the winner, you know.

CAPTAIN L. I do not understand you, Mr. Frippery. There seems to be something so obscure in your language.

BEN (*just enough intoxicated to make him stagger a little and becoming bold and forgetting himself*). Dam me, if I can understand him either.

CAPTAIN L. Ben, what is that you say?

BEN. I say, sir, I do n't understand him.

CAPTAIN L. You do n't understand who?

BEN. Did I say *un*derstand, sir? I mean, sir, that I can stand. (*Staggering.*)

CAPTAIN L. Why, Ben, I believe you are drunk.

BEN. O no, sir (*staggering*), not in the least. I 'm only a little dizzy. I have been turning round so much in looking at the things in this room, that I 've made my head swim.

MR. F. Come, Captain, let us take another glass of madeira; for friends we are and friends we always will be. (*Mr. F. goes to the table and fills up the glasses.*)

BEN (*aside*). We will all be friends together. Why do n't he ask me to drink.

CAPTAIN L (*aside*). I now see all through Mr. Frippery's design. But he shall not drive me into a hasty marriage with Lady Merlin as easily as he wishes. There 's three hundred pounds to be won, and I intend to have the pleasure of counting that money and putting it in my own purse. He will not make much out of me this time.

MR. F. Come, Captain, I am waiting for you.

CAPTAIN L. Excuse me, I was just thinking of a business engagement I had overlooked, which I must attend to immediately (*goes up to the table and Mr. Frippery hands him a glass of wine*).

BEN (*aside—staggering*). Another glass *would* make the Captain think I was drunk.

MR. F. Now, Captain, for a toast.

CAPTAIN L. Well, here 's to our friendship—may its golden links remain unbroken.

MR. F. Most excellent. (*They both drink their glasses and set then down again on the table.*)

BEN (*aside*). I know it 's excellent. I wish I had another glass.

CAPTAIN L. I must now bid you good day, Mr. Frippery. (*Shakes Mr. F. by the hand.*)

MR. F. Good day, Captain. I hope I shall soon see you again.

CAPTAIN L. Come, Ben, you must walk off that feeling of intoxication before supper-time, for I see that you have been taking a glass too much.

BEN (*staggering*). Captain, you are mistaken, sir. I only feel a little weak in the knees by standing so long, sir.

CAPTAIN L. I say you must walk it off, and that at a quick step, too.

BEN. Well, here goes. (*Ben walks rapidly off toward the door and comes in contact with the waiter, who is coming in, and they both fall down by the collision. Ben jumps up before the waiter does, and throws himself on the waiter and commences pounding him. The Captain goes up and pulls Ben off, and the waiter gets up.*)

CAPTAIN L. Ben, what the devil are you about?

BEN. That chap run against me on purpose, sir.

WAITER. It was you who run against me on purpose, for I was coming here to see if Mr. Frippery wanted any thing.

MR. F (*laughing*). It was only an accidental collision, Captain. You can go, waiter, I do not wish any thing. (*Waiter goes out, shaking his head in anger.*)

CAPTAIN L. Ben, now follow me.

[*Exit Captain.* L. H. 1 E.

BEN (*going and aside*). That knocked a glass or two of *wine* out of my head, but I put a few strong *punches* in him. [*Exit Ben.* L. H. 1 E.

MR. F. I did not succeed quite as well with the Captain as I wished, although I forced him up to a pretty warm point. I will call on Lady Merlin to-morrow morning, and perhaps something may occur, while I am there, that will give me an opportunity of offering her my services to assist her in bringing the Captain to her feet, and then I will win the three hundred pounds, which I will—yes, I will—call on Lady Merlin in the morning.

[*Exit Mr. Frippery.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—BEN SHORT'S *apartment and sleeping room. A bed, table, chairs, &c., are in the room. A pair of Ben's boots are lying on the floor by the table. Two loaded pistols, a candle and some matches are on the table.*

Enter LUCY, *with a vail over her head hiding her face and carrying in her hand a man's mask.*

LUCY. Gracious! I never should have found this room of Ben's if it had not been for Susan, the chamber-maid of this house. It was a good thing for me that I knew her so well, for she told me all about it, and showed me the way, and said that Ben always goes to his room in the evening, just before supper time, to see that all things are right and fix himself for the evening. I hope he won't come up before I get through with my arrangements (*goes to the table*). I declare, here is a candle, and matches too. What a dear nice little man that Mr. Short is, to have things so convenient in his room. As it is getting rather too dark for me to do what I want to, I will light the candle. (*Lucy lights the candle and sees the pistols.*) Why, bless me, here are his pistols! (*Examines them.*) They are loaded, too. For fear Ben might shoot me for a robber, I will take out the balls and keep away all harm (*she draws the balls from the pistols and lays them on the table again*). Let me see. The first thing I must do will be to make a man in Ben's bed. (*Lucy takes the mask and attaches it to the end of the pillow and lays the pillow lengthwise under the bedclothes, leaving the end with the mask on out, the whole presenting the appearance of a man in the bed.*) If this do n't frighten Ben a little, I am very much mistaken (*discovers the boots*). Here are his boots—a good discovery. Now I 'll fix these boots under his bed in such a way that Ben will think there is a robber there, certain. (*Lucy fixes the boots under the bed, so that the feet only project from underneath, the coverlid, or valance, of the bed reaching to the floor.*) I believe that 's all I want to fix. Now, if this only turns out, as I hope it will, I shall be a made woman. (*Footsteps are heard approaching.*) Gracious! here comes Ben. I got things fixed just in good time. I must run and hide myself in that closet, and see how Ben will act, and be ready to take advantage of any thing that I can

turn to my own benefit, (*Lucy blows out the candle and conceals herself in the closet.*)

Enter BEN. L. H. 1 E.

BEN. I was a little tipsy at Mr. Frippery's to-day, that 's a fact. But the long walk I took soon drove it all away. What a rich scene that was, that happened at Lady Merlin's this morning. I can 't forget the sweet kisses I stole from Lucy. I feel their delicious flavor on my lips yet. She is a dev'lish nice girl, and I do love her like forty. I wonder if all things are right in my room. I must examine (*goes to the table and lights the candle*). I always look under the bed first ever since that infernal thief was found under the Captain's bed (*takes the candle in one hand and one of the pistols in the other, which he cocks, goes to the bed very cautiously, and starts back in affright on seeing the boots projecting from under the bed*). I swear, there is a thief under my bed, sure enough (*he places the candle on the floor, retaining the pistol in his right hand and cautiously approaches the boots*). If I do n't shoot that rascal before he knows what he 's about, I wish he may steal every thing I have. (*He seizes a boot with his left hand and pulls it suddenly out from under the bed, and in doing so, falls backward on the floor with the boot in his hand, and fires off the pistol as he falls over. Lucy looks out of the closet to see what has occurred and draws back again. She looks out often during this scene of Ben's. Ben raises himself up, and sitting on the floor, recognizes his own boot in his hand.*) Why, what a damn fool I have made of myself in taking my own boots for a robber. (*Ben gets up.*) I am very glad that nobody saw what an ass I made of myself that time, or heard the noise of my pistol. (*He picks up the candle, goes to the table and sets it down, also lays the pistol on the table. He looks cautiously round the room, his eyes rest on the supposed man in his bed and he starts back in alarm.*) By all that 's great and good, there is a man lying in my bed, or else my eyes are bewitched and I can not see well. (*He rubs his eyes.*) Yes, I 'll swear there is a man, and no mistake. He sleeps dev'lish sound, for the crack of my pistol never moved him an inch. I 'll just take my other pistol, for fear of accident. (*He takes his other pistol from the table and cocks it, then seizes*

a chair and cautiously approaches the bed, and placing the pistol in his bosom, strikes the supposed man over the head with the chair with all his might.) I have given him the devil, any how, before he had a chance to wake up and attack me. I think I am a match now for any robber. (*Sets the chair down and keeps the pistol still in his hand. Lucy makes a noise in the closet, which again alarms Ben very much*). By the lord Harry! if there is not another robber in the closet. My room is filled with thieves. I 'm nearly frightened to death. But I 'll shoot that fellow before he has a chance to shoot me. (*Ben approaches the closet and fires through the door; a dreadful scream is heard and Lucy rushes out, with her vail close around her face, staggering.*)

Lucy. I am killed. You have murdered me. (*Falls to the floor.*)

Ben (*dreadfully frightened*). Good Lord! what have I done. I have killed somebody and a woman, too. I shall be hung. O Lucy! Lucy! what will you do when you hear this!

Lucy (*groans*).

Ben. She can 't be quite dead yet.

Lucy (*groans again*).

Ben. I 'll go and examine the corpse. (*Ben goes up to Lucy, after looking cautiously round the room, and kneeling on the floor beside her, removes her vail and discovers Lucy, and, in great agony of mind exclaims:*) Oh, Lucy Summers! what have I done!

Lucy (*groans again*).

Ben. Oh, she is not quite dead. If she would only live. (*Crying.*) Oh, Lucy, my own dear, dear Lucy, do not die. Oh that I had made you my wife weeks ago. If you were only alive, my own dear Lucy. (*Captain Linwood enters and discovers their position unseen by them, and is much amused at what he sees and hears.*) I would marry you this very night, so help me Heaven.

Lucy. (*Raises herself quickly up and throwing her arms around Ben's neck, exclaims:*) Then marry me, Ben. I *will* live for your sake.

Ben. What! not dead! (*Ben embraces her.*) O Lucy, how happy you make me feel. I thought I had surely

killed you. I will marry you now, even if the Captain should not pay me one cent of my wages.

CAPTAIN L. You shall marry her, Ben, and with my consent, too. (*Lucy and Ben rise up quickly, greatly embarrassed at being discovered by the Captain.*)

BEN (*bowing*). Thank you, Captain, a thousand times, sir.

CAPTAIN L. No thanks, Ben. Lucy has played the game so well and won you so bravely, that I will pay you in full all your wages and release you from your agreement. Lucy is fully entitled to you and all you are worth.

BEN. Captain, you are too kind, sir.

CAPTAIN L. Not at all. You can marry Lucy as soon as you please. I will leave you to make your own arrangements. (*Aside and going*). Dam me, if that was not the best played game for a husband I ever saw.

[*Exit Captain.*

BEN. Now, Lucy, tell me how you came here and how you got into that closet?

LUCY. It was my love for you, Ben, that made me so bold. You must forgive me for what I 've done, and I will tell you all, after we are married.

BEN. I do forgive you, Lucy. But, bless me! I forgot that I had knocked a man's brains out, whom I caught lying in my bed, no doubt with the intention of robbing me.

LUCY. You had better go and examine him, Ben, and see how *much brains* he had to knock out.

BEN (*goes up to the bed, turns down the clothes and picks up the pillow with the mask attached to it: discovering it to be a hoax, lays it down again, much chagrined*). Why, I can 't say that I do see much brains lying about here. But I can see, plain enough, all through your plot, now, Lucy. You are a very cunning, dear creature, to take an innocent young man like me in, in such a way as this. I have been made so happy, though, by the result, Lucy, that I can 't get angry, if I wanted to. (*Takes Lucy by the hands.*)

LUCY. No, you must not get angry, Ben, for I will tell you all I have done; and I know you will only laugh at it.

BEN. Well, well, Lucy, let us go and make arrangements for our wedding. You have caught me in the

slickest kind of a way; and, in return for it, I 'll give you a *short* name, which I hope will be more agreeable to you than the *long Summers* you have been enjoying.

[*Exeunt Lucy and Ben.* L. H.

SCENE II.—*A room in* LADY MERLIN'S *house.*

Enter LADY MERLIN. R. H. 1 E.

LADY M. I shall be ashamed to meet Capt. Linwood, after the failure of my disguise, yesterday—and hearing, too, the remarks he make to his footman. I have a plan now invented, which I know will make him yield—and which I will carry out at once. But I must have the assistance of some gentleman to aid me. Ben, the Captain's footman, would not answer, for his head is nearly turned with joy on account of his contemplated marriage with Lucy, this evening. There is Mr. Frippery—the very one for my purpose. He will do any thing to please me, and consider himself greatly honored in being asked to assist me. Yes, I will ask his aid. (*A knocking at the door is heard.*) Some one is at the door. I hope it is not Capt. Linwood. Lucy! (*No answer by Lucy.*) Why does she not answer? Lucy! Lucy!

LUCY (*outside*). Coming, ma'm. (*Enter Lucy with a night-cap in her hand, which she is finishing.*) Here I am, ma'm. (*Knocking at the door again.*)

LADY M. Do go to the door, Lucy. [*Lucy goes to the door and shows in Mr. Frippery.*] (*Aside.*) The very gentleman I wish to see.

MR. F. Good morning, my dear Lady Merlin (*bows*).

LADY M. Good morning, Mr. Frippery; I was just thinking of you.

MR. F. Ah, indeed! I am most happy to hear that I hold a place in your thoughts, my very dear madam, however small it may be.

LADY M (*aside*). How shall I make known my wishes? (*To Mr. Frippery.*) Mr. Frippery, I have something to ask you, which I am at a loss how to communicate.

MR. F. Do not hesitate, my dear madam. Command

me in any way you please. I am your most obedient servant.

LADY M. I am fearful that you may think me too bold—or, perhaps, imprudent.

MR. F. No, not for the world, my dear Lady Merlin. Use my services freely, in any way you please.

LADY M (*aside*). I must do so. (*Aloud.*) Mr. Frippery, under no other circumstances would I act as I am about to act. But, having every confidence in your honor, as a gentleman, I will ask you for your aid in an affair in which my heart is deeply interested.

MR. F. Speak out, my dear madam, I pray you, and do not feel the least delicacy. You are not aware, my dear madam, of the great respect I entertain for you; and I, consequently, could not do otherwise than serve you to the utmost of my abilities.

LADY M (*aside*). I will ask his aid. (*To Lucy.*) Lucy, I do not want you just now. (*Lucy exits.* R. H.) Mr. Frippery, I will at once say that——

MR. F. Go on, my dear madam.

LADY M. I was going to say, Mr. Frippery, that I have a plan invented for making a certain gentleman, who has been addressing me for some time, and who, I know, loves me, propose at once.

MR. F. And that certain gentleman is no other than Capt. Linwood.

LADY M. Yes, sir, he is the gentleman.

MR. F. My dear Lady Merlin, you could not have asked me to aid you in any matter in which I could take so lively an interest as in this.

LADY M. I am pleased to see that you enlist so eagerly, Mr. Frippery.

MR. F. Why, my dear madam, I confess to you that I have a great interest at stake in the issue of this very matter, which I will explain to you hereafter, to say nothing of my own anxious feelings for your happiness and welfare.

LADY M. Now that I have broken the ice, I will tell you my plot, and what I wish you to do. It is this—— (*A knocking is heard at the door.* L. H. 1 E.) Good heavens! I hope that is not the Captain. Lucy! (*Enter Lucy.* R. H. 1 E.)

LUCY. Here I am, ma'm.

LADY M. Some one is at the door. (*Lucy goes to the door, and Ben Short enters and shakes hands with Lucy very lovingly.*)

BEN (*to Lady M*). Good morning, ma'm. (*Bows. Ben and Lucy walk to the rear and converse together.*)

LADY M. Mr. Frippery, if you have no objection, suppose we walk into the garden, and there I can unfold to you my scheme without interruption.

MR. F. With the greatest pleasure, my dear madam. Please take my arm. (*Lady M. takes Mr. F.'s arm, and they exeunt.* L. H. 1 E.)

BEN *and* LUCY *come forward.*

BEN. There 's some mischief hatching here, Lucy.

LUCY. I think so, too; but I could n't find out any thing.

BEN. Well, who cares. We need not care for any thing, nor any body but ourselves, now.

LUCY. O, yes, Ben—I care for my mistress. She has been the kindest kind of a mistress to me, and I love her dearly; but not so dearly as I love you, Ben.

BEN. Now, Lucy, I must have one for that. (*Ben kisses her.*)

LUCY. You ought to wait till after we are married.

BEN. Why, Lucy, whenever you say you love me, my lips pucker right up for a kiss.

LUCY. I 'll be more careful, then, and not say so again to-day.

BEN. May be I 'll not wait for you to say so. Lucy, the Captain has acted the perfect gentleman toward me, to-day. He has paid me all my wages in full and given me up my agreement.

LUCY. He is such a good, dear Captain. I hope my mistress may soon make him her husband.

BEN. Yes, so do I. It would be so comfortable all around for us.

LUCY. I feel certain it will turn out so. I think that my mistress will bring all things out right, yet.

BEN. Well, Lucy, to-night we are to be made one; and who will dare say we will not be the happiest of the happy?

LUCY. Nobody; for we will be so. [*They sing.*]

Air—"MATRIMONIAL SWEETS."

LUCY. To-night! to-night! how happy we 'll be!
From every care and trouble free,
Our joys shall never have an end,
But love and bliss unceasing blend:
You 'll be so good, so kind and true—
BEN. I 'll never love any, only you.
LUCY. Our days will thus be happy spent—
BEN. We 'll know naught else but true content.

(*Both sing and dance.*)

To-night! to-night! how happy we 'll be!
From every care and trouble free,
Our joys shall never have an end,
But love and bliss unceasing blend.

(*Lucy and Ben repeat the last four lines, and continue dancing, till Mr. Frippery enters.*)

Enter MR. FRIPPERY *in a hurry, and apparently much alarmed.* L. H. 1 E.

MR. F. Lucy, run to your mistress, quickly. (*Lucy and Ben are much alarmed.*) She was suddenly seized with a dreadful fit, while we were walking in the garden, and is now lying on the sofa in the next room, in a most dangerous situation.

LUCY. O, my poor, dear mistress! (*Lucy runs out.* L. H. 1 E.)

MR. F. Ben, you had better run and inform Capt. Linwood of Lady Merlin's serious situation; and tell him, if he wishes to see her alive, he must not delay a moment in coming hither. I must go for the doctor.

BEN. Yes, sir—I will go right away, sir. (*Aside and going.*) I hope this is all a sham. [*Exit Ben.* L. H. 1 E.

MR. F. I must now hurry after the doctor, for he must arrive here before Capt. Linwood.

[*Exit Mr. Frippery.* L. H. 1 E.

SCENE III.—*A room in* LADY MERLIN'S *house.* LADY MERLIN *is discovered lying on a sofa, with a shawl thrown over her, feigning to be very ill.*

Enter LUCY *in great distress, and runs up to* LADY MERLIN.

LUCY. O, my dear mistress, I hope you are not going to die, ma'm?

LADY M (*with feeble voice*). I do not know, Lucy; perhaps not.

LUCY. Do you feel very bad, ma'm?

LADY M. Not so very bad, Lucy.

LUCY. Can 't I do something for you, to make you feel better, ma'm?

LADY M. I do not think you can be of any service, Lucy.

LUCY. O, my dear mistress, what shall I do!

LADY M. Try to keep calm, Lucy. Perhaps I 'll soon recover; it may be only a temporary attack.

LUCY. I wish the doctor would come.

LADY M. Lucy, did Mr. Frippery send Ben for Capt. Linwood?

LUCY. I do n't know, ma'm; but I suppose he did, ma'm.

LADY M. I hope he will come, for fear worse may happen.

LUCY. I do, too, ma'm. (*A knocking at the door is heard.*) There he is now, ma'm. (*Lucy goes to the door quickly, and Mr. Frippery enters in the disguise of a doctor, with black gown and spectacles on and cane in his hand.*) Walk in, doctor. There lies my poor, dear mistress. (*Pointing to Lady Merlin.*) Do make her well soon, doctor. (*Mr. Frippery goes up to Lady Merlin.*)

MR. F. Good morning, madam. I hope that your symptoms are not very serious. (*Feels Lady Merlin's pulse.*) There is great excitement of the nervous system. Let me see your tongue, madam. (*Lady Merlin shows Mr. F. her tongue.*) The tongue looks quite clean and healthy.

LADY M. Do you think my case dangerous, doctor?

MR. F. I can not answer that question, my dear madam. But, "while there is life there is hope."

LUCY. O, how glad I am to hear you say so, doctor.

Mr. F. How long has it been since you were first attacked, madam?

Lady M. I have felt the symptoms coming on for some time, doctor.

Mr. F. Where do you feel the most acute pain, madam?

Lady M. Here, doctor. (*Laying her hand on her heart.*)

Mr. F. I am fearful that the malady has reached that most vital organ, my dear madam; and, unless something is done to give you immediate relief, your case will soon become more complicated.

Lucy. O, doctor, do n't say so!

Mr. F. Fearing, my dear madam, that your case might baffle all my skill, I took the precaution to send for another physician, who, I think, is more capable of giving you relief than I am. (*A knocking at the door is heard.*) Ah! there he comes. Admit him Lucy, at once. (*Lucy runs to the door, and Capt. Linwood rushes in, greatly alarmed. Lucy looks completely puzzled, not knowing what is going on.*)

Captain L (*as he runs in*). Where is she—where is Lady Merlin? (*Runs up to the sofa and kneels down, taking Lady Merlin's hand. Lady Merlin puts on an appearance of great feebleness.*) Oh, Lady Merlin, has it come to this?

Mr. F (*placing his hand on the Captain's shoulder.*) Gently, my dear sir; her nerves are quite unstrung.

Captain L. Speak to me, Lady Merlin.

Lady M (*in a very feeble voice*). Is that your voice, Captain Linwood?

Captain L. It is, Lady Merlin.

Lady M. I am glad you have come. I thought you would be too late, Captain.

Captain L. Speak not thus, my dear Lady Merlin? Something can yet be done. Doctor, can n't you advise something?

Mr. F. Indeed, I am at a loss how to act, her case is such a peculiar one.

Lady M. Yes, I feel that a change must soon take place. Captain Linwood, will you not grant me one last request, before it is too late.

CAPTAIN L. Yes, Lady Merlin, on my honor I will grant you any thing you may desire.

LADY M. I could die so happily, Captain, if I could only become your wife and call you once by the endearing name of husband.

CAPTAIN L. You shall become my wife at once, my dear Lady Merlin. (*Captain L. goes to the door quickly. Mr. Frippery and Lady Merlin shake hands in joy while the Captain's back is turned.*) Ben, run over to Mr. Gordon's house, quickly, and tell him his services are wanted here immediately. (*The Captain returns to Lady Merlin and takes her hand.*)

LADY M. I feel some better, Captain.

MR. F. I think, Captain, that she is a *little* easier, now.

CAPTAIN L. Can n't you administer something that will give her a little more strength, doctor?

MR. F. Nature, now, must take its course, Captain.

CAPTAIN L. I wish Mr. Gordon were here. (*Enter* MR. GORDON, *followed by Ben.*) Here he is, thank Heaven. (*The Captain meets Mr. Gordon.*) I pray you, my dear sir, delay not a moment, but marry Lady Merlin to me, as quick as possible, as she is in a most dangerous situation. (*Mr. Gordon and the Captain go up to Lady Merlin.*)

MR. GORDON. I am required to join in wedlock this man and this woman; presuming that there are no obstacles in the way, I will proceed, without further remark, with the ceremony. (*To Captain Linwood.*) Do you take this woman for your wedded wife?

CAPTAIN L. I do.

MR. GORDON (*to Lady Merlin*). Do you take this man for your wedded husband?

LADY M. I do.

MR. GORDON. I then pronounce you husband and wife, in the presence of these witnesses, and may Heaven bless you.

MR. FRIPPERY (*aside*). The three hundred pounds are mine.

MR. GORDON. I will now take my leave. Good day.

[*Mr. Gordon bows and exits.* L. H.

CAPTAIN L. My wife, my own dear wife. (*Embraces*

Lady Merlin. While the Captain and Lady Merlin are thus engaged, Mr. Frippery throws off his disguise as the Doctor, unseen by them, and appears in the dress of Mr. Frippery. Lucy and Ben are earnestly talking together, not knowing what to make of the strange state of affairs, and appear much astonished at Mr. Frippery's appearance.)

Lady M. O, what a thrilling sensation! A change for the better has suddenly come over me. Assist me up, dear husband, and let me lean upon your arm. I will try to walk a little. (*The Captain looks perplexed at the sudden change in Lady Merlin's appearance. She takes his arm and they walk slowly toward the front of the stage. Mr. Frippery follows them, and steps up to the Captain's side.*)

Mr. Frippery. Captain, I will now take the three hundred pounds.

Captain L (*starting back, utterly astounded, looking at Mr. F. and then at Lady Merlin.*) What! is it possible that I have been ensnared?

Lady M. O, Captain, forgive me. 'T was love for you. (*Throws her arms around the Captain's neck.*)

Captain L. I see it all. I have been decoyed. Yes, decoyed into the arms of the very woman I love above all others. But I am so happy in seeing the idol of my heart well, and so blest in being her husband, that I freely forgive you both for your admirably planned scheme. I have been, unexpectedly, made happy. So here 's my hand, Mr. Frippery (*shakes him cordially by the hand*), and here 's your three hundred pounds (*takes out his pocket book and pays Mr. Frippery the money, which Mr. F. takes.*)

Mr. F. My dear Captain, allow me the honor of presenting to your accomplished wife the three hundred pounds as a bridal gift (*gives to Lady Merlin the money*).

Lady M (*taking the money*). You are most kind, most generous, Mr. Frippery.

Mr. F (*throws back an outside coat and displays a lieutenant's uniform, and at the same time throws off his wig and mustaches, and appears as Lieutenant Charles Clifford. To Lady Merlin:*) Sister!

Lady M (*screams*). My dear brother? (*They rush into each other's embrace.*)

CAPTAIN L (*much astonished*). Good heavens! It is Lieutenant Charles Clifford, of the 42d. (*Ben and Lucy have been, and are, in great joy at the happy termination of all things.*)

MR. F. It is, indeed, your fellow soldier and friend, Charles Clifford. (*Leaves his sister, Lady M., and runs to the embrace of Captain Linwood.*)

CAPTAIN L. This is the happiest moment of my life.

LADY M. And of mine.

MR. F. I could not be happier, for I see my dear sister the happy wife of my best friend.

CAPTAIN L. You must tell us, Charley, why you remained incog. so long?

MR. F. It was a mere mischievous freak of mine, I assure you; done to enjoy a little fun and amusement. I will give you all the particulars hereafter. (*Ben and Lucy come forward.*)

LUCY (*to Lady Merlin*). I am so glad, ma'm, that you made up your mind not to die.

BEN (*to Captain L.*) And I am so glad, Captain, that you made up your mind to marry. I hope you will all come to our wedding to night.

CAPTAIN L. We will certainly be there, Ben.

LUCY (*to Lady M.*) Yes, please ma'm, do n't forget us.

LADY M. We will not forget you, Lucy.

CAPTAIN LINWOOD (*coming forward and addressing the audience*):

Kind friends! I 've a word to say
To you, on this my wedding day.
Tis this:
When woman once resolves to marry,
In vain you try her schemes to parry.
To catch a husband, she will plan
Ways enough for any man.
Her plots are many, she 's always trying—
As a last resort she takes to dying:
No sooner is she made a wife,
Than back again she comes to life.

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